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Observer: Rap Brown, a Congressmen's Friend in Need

By RUSSELL BAKER

WASHINGTON, Aug. 9—Many persons have been infuriated this summer by the demagogic virtuosity of H. Rap Brown, but very few know "Brown's" true identity. His real name is John Green and he is an undercover outside agitator on the payroll of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

His assignment is to help Congress find inexpensive solutions to the nation's racial problem. When racial animosity threatens to erupt at a given location, Green—or "Rap Brown," to use his undercover name—hurries to the scene, delivers inflammatory harangues and in other unsubtle ways seeks to make himself highly visible.

How It's Done

In this way, Brown helps Congress to save billions. A Senate aide who insists on anonymity explains:

"If riots break out, Congress naturally has to investigate the cause and produce solutions to eliminate it. Some of these solutions can get pretty expensive. If you can discover that the riots are caused by outside agitators, however, you can let

the taxpayer off cheap with a bill to provide prison accommodations for any agitators caught crossing state lines."

Thus, as an undercover outside agitator, Green performs an important financial service for the "white power structure" for which, in his identity as "Brown," he is forced to profess violent distaste.

Launched in Committee

The idea for a Congressional corps of undercover outside agitators originated three years ago when the Appropriations Committee invented "Stokely Carmichael."

"Carmichael"—his real name is Peter Mulligan—was an ambitious young lawyer with a theatrical taste for rhetoric and undercover work which was not satisfied by the humdrum of his chores on the Senate staff.

At that time the civil-rights movement had begun to generate such popularity that Congress foresaw it might soon be required to support public promises with large outlays of cash.

To forestall this possibility—after all, the United States could rebuild its cities or it could unbuild Vietnam, but it could

scarcely be expected to do both without affecting the economy—Mulligan was sent forth as "Stokely Carmichael" to reduce public support for the civil-rights movement.

It is said that "Black Power!", his slogan which so successfully cooled the egalitarian ardor of white liberals, was actually the inspiration of Senator Eastland of Mississippi. In any case, it helped Congress avoid some rather heavy expenditures, and incidentally generated a good deal of New York sympathy for the Mississippi way of life.

When Mulligan tired of the thankless role of undercover outside agitator and expressed a yearning to see that world, he was taken on by the C.I.A., with the stipulation that he maintain his "Carmichael" cover. He was last heard from in Cuba.

Congressmen are naturally reluctant to say how many other undercover outside agitators they have in the field, ready to provide them with quick low-budget solutions should social breakdown continue. And, of course, as more sensitive Congressmen remind us, the use of undercover agitators is not dictated solely by stinginess.

"The fact is," one such Congressman explained, "some problems are so difficult that we can't do much about them, no matter how much we have to spend. Still, the public expects us to come up with answers. As long as we have a few 'Rap Browns' working for us we can be certain of having an answer when the public wants it."

To Create an Illusion

The Congressman's need to create the illusion of being at grips with great issues which are, in fact, beyond him extends to fields other than race. It maintains a large cadre of undercover peace agitators, for example.

These are the agents who conducted the now infamous flag burnings this year for the House of Representatives, which was then sorely frustrated by its inability to come to grips with the Vietnam issue.

With the speed of a Warner Brothers cavalry, the House galloped to defense of the flag by voting to imprison its deserters. Thus its undercover agitators help it to deal with crisis abroad and at home, and "Rap Browns" save the day.